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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002677

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TAGS: [IZ](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PNAT](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)  
SUBJECT: IRAQI MINDEF ON IA DEVELOPMENT

REF: BAGHDAD 2464

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Margaret Scobey for Reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

11. (S//REL GBR AUS) SUMMARY: The Ambassador met with Iraqi Minister of Defense Abd al-Qadir al-Mufraji July 21 to discuss Baghdad security. Al-Mufraji said the situation reflected personal struggles among politicians who are behind the militias killing innocent Iraqis. He pledged to "nip in the bud" any infiltration of religious-affiliated militias into the MOD. Al-Mufraji twice denied that he felt political pressure to "avoid doing the right thing". He felt that improving coordination across the MNF-I and Iraqi Army (IA) parallel chains of command to accelerate response times to incidents is more effective than merely increasing the size of the Iraqi army, as Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki has proposed. He felt that al-Maliki, who has no military background, needs a military officer as deputy commander in chief of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to help him make decisions rapidly. Al-Mufraji will source two additional Iraqi brigades from existing trained troops because it takes one to two years to fully train new recruits. He claimed that only one senior MOD officer - whose sister is active in the "Party of Return" movement to restore Saddam Hussein to power - is being removed under de-Ba'athification, while other officers are being removed for well-known acts of bribery and corruption.  
END SUMMARY

#### The Ambassador's Question

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12. (S//REL GBR AUS) On July 21, the Ambassador, accompanied by Pol-Mil Counselor (notetaker), called on Minister of Defense Abd al-Qadir al-Mufraji to discuss the MOD's views on the Baghdad Security Plan and other issues in advance of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's official visit to the United States, July 25-27. The Ambassador posed three questions that will likely be asked of the Prime Minister by the U.S. Congress and the press during the visit.

What more is needed to improve the security situation? The impression is that Baghdad is out of control and that the new government of national unity is unable to deliver on its pledge of improvement. If this continues, individual Iraqis may take security into their own hands, which would worsen the situation.

#### Clean Up Iraqi Politics Behind the Sunni and Shia Militias

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13. (S//REL GBR AUS) On Baghdad security, al-Mufraji pointed out that "Baghdad is not Iraq," although Baghdad is special. In cooperation with Coalition Forces (CF), the IA had

destroyed much of the "evil jihadist movement", and would soon defeat organized criminal groups. The security situation reflected personal struggles among the politicians behind the Sunni and Shia militias. "We need to clean up Iraqi politics ourselves," he said. In Baghdad, the IA's target is terrorists, not political groups. During the ban on cars during Friday prayers, politicians routinely send their militias into the streets, and the MOD does not know how to handle it. The Ministry of Interior had been infiltrated by armed, religious political groups, and with the Coalition's help, al-Mufraji said he wants to prevent any similar situation from developing in MOD. As Minister of Defense and a soldier, al-Mufraji asserted he would carry out his mission, but the politicians would need to revise their politics.

Does MOD Have the Right Force Structure?

14. (S//REL GBR AUS) Building on al-Mufraji's point, the Ambassador noted that he meets daily with the leadership, trying to understand what motivates Iraqi politicians to behave irresponsibly and how to motivate them to improve. But dialogue itself was insufficient, in his estimation. Judicious use of force is often also needed. The Ambassador asked if the MOD has the right force structure, the right strategy, and the right concept of operations to bring progress.

15. (S//REL GBR AUS) Referring to the example raised by Minister of State Foreign Affairs al-Esawi at the July 9 Ministerial Council for National Security (reftel), al-Mufraji said that citizens in western Iraq, near Ramadi and Fallujah, want to help MNF-I and the IA kill al-Qaeda in

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Iraq (AQI) terrorists. They had been asking for help for two weeks, without any response from MNF-I. This area is not a priority for MFC-I and the IA. Al-Mufraji advised that we need to create a good command and control (C2) system to facilitate a quick and strong reaction to these opportunities.

16. (S//REL GBR AUS) Responding to the Ambassador's observation that some in the US think that the MOD does not have a "political go signal" to move against the militias, al-Mufraji denied that he lacks political backing. Rather, he said that a more pressing problem was the delay introduced by the need to coordinate IA movements with MNF-I plans to avoid friendly fire incidents. The Ambassador, noting the parallel Iraqi and American chains of command, asked if there was a dual key system, in which the IA could not move unless MNF-I Commanding General Casey agreed. Al-Mufraji said that coordination was good, but time was lost through a back-and-forth process. A new path of operations would reduce response time, particularly in Baghdad.

17. (S//REL GBR AUS) The Ambassador asked if MOD has the right force structure, assuming that the C2 coordination process could be accelerated. Al-Mufraji replied that MOD and MNF-I were studying this question scientifically. One structural problem he noted is balancing the short-term need to improve Baghdad security and the long-term ramifications. If today the IA increased by 50 battalions and succeeded in improving the security situation, tomorrow we would face the problem of demobilization. Al-Mufraji agreed Baghdad needs two more brigades, but he would prefer to source them from existing structures. The IA could not wait to train an effective brigade from raw recruits. Al-Mufraji informed the Ambassador that he would soon start to implement one element of Phase II of the Baghdad Security Plan - dividing Baghdad into two separate military commands, separated by the Tigris River. Phase II would hopefully stop armed groups and militias. Accelerating the coordination process would obviate the need for more troops.

¶8. (S//REL GBR AUS) Al-Mufraji explained that the Government of Iraq (GOI) needed to improve its own C2 system. The Prime Minister is the IA's Commander in Chief (CINC). But he is a civilian, and for balance he needs a military officer as Deputy CINC to help him make decisions rapidly. Even the National Security Advisor, Dr. Mowafaq Rubaie, is a civilian, and the members of the informal National Security Advisory Group are all civilians. Al-Mufraji stressed the need for more military officers who speak clearly and succinctly, with fewer civilians who turn meetings into politics and lectures on morality.

¶9. (S//REL GBR AUS) The Ambassador asked Al-Mufraji if he was being held back from doing the right thing by politicians. Al-Mufraji responded "so far, no." Al-Mufraji added that all political organizations want him on their side. He commented that they approach him as if he is depriving them of something. "I won't be the defense minister for the (Sunni) National Accord Front, or for the Kurds, but I am the minister for all of Iraq!"

¶10. (S//REL GBR AUS) The Ambassador asked if MOD officials were being removed in the name of de-Ba'athification. Al-Mufraji replied that only six are being discharged, and five of those were guilty of corruption and bribery. The sixth case, that of Brigadier General Sayyid, Legal Department Chief of Staff, is well-known. His sister was a high ranking member of a Ba'ath organization, her husband was a Ba'ath party leader in charge of higher education, and she now works in Syria for the "Party of Return" (of the Ba'ath Party to power). MOD could not keep an officer with such family connections in such a responsible position.  
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